

REMARKS

Claims 1, 2, 4, 5 and 7 are all the claims pending in the application.

I. Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

The Examiner has rejected claims 1, 2, 4, 5 and 7 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Fujieda et al. (U.S. 6,557,002) in view of UBIC - Universal Binary Identity Code and further in view of McCay et al. (U.S. 6,223,137).

Claim 1, 4 and 7, as amended, recite that the serial number of the product is changed when at least one of the parts of the product is replaced with a new part, while the serial number of the product is not changed when no part of the product is replaced. Applicants respectfully submit that the cited prior art fails to disclose, suggest or otherwise render obvious at least this feature recited in claims 1, 4 and 7.

Regarding Fujieda, Applicants note that this reference discloses a structural element data management system that is able to display a relationship between a desired product or parts and a structural element forming the product or parts (see Abstract). As recognized by the Examiner in the Office Action, Fujieda does not disclose or suggest assigning unique serial numbers to the product or parts (see Office Action at page 4).

Accordingly, as Fujieda does not disclose the use of serial numbers, Applicants respectfully submit that Fujieda does not disclose or suggest that a serial number of a product is changed when at least one of the parts of the product is replaced with a new part, while the serial number of the product is not changed when no part of the product is replaced, as recited in amended claims 1, 4 and 7.

Regarding the UBIC (Universal Binary Identity Code) reference, Applicants note that this reference discloses that each UBIC includes a model number and a serial number, wherein no two objects should have the same model number and serial number. For example, the reference explains that two coke cans would share the same model number, but would each would have a different serial number.

Thus, while the UBIC reference discloses that different serial numbers are applied to products having the same structure, Applicants respectfully submit that there is no suggestion in the UBIC reference that the serial number of a product will change if one of the parts of that product is replaced with a new part.

Accordingly, Applicants submit that the UBIC reference does not disclose, suggest or otherwise render obvious that a serial number of a product is changed when at least one of the parts of the product is replaced with a new part, while the serial number of the product is not changed when no part of the product is replaced, as recited in amended claims 1, 4 and 7.

Regarding McCay, Applicants note that this reference discloses a relational database which stores information related to manufacturer, part number, serial number, usage history, and/or maintenance history (see col. 3, lines 34-43). Applicants respectfully submit, however, that while McCay discloses a relational database that can store serial numbers, there is disclosure or suggestion in McCay that a serial number of a product is changed when at least one of the parts of the product is replaced with a new part, while the serial number of the product is not changed when no part of the product is replaced, as recited in amended claims 1, 4 and 7.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that the cited prior art references, either alone or in combination, do not disclose, suggest or otherwise render obvious all of the features recited in claims 1, 4 and 7. Accordingly, Applicants submit that claims 1, 4 and 7 are patentable over the cited prior art, an indication of which is kindly requested.

Further, Applicants note that claim 2 depends from claim 1, and that claim 5 depends from claim 4. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that these claims are patentable at least by virtue of their dependency.

II. Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may best be resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

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